

The Republican.

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PHILOSOPHICAL AND PERSECUTED MINISTERS; OR ENGLAND'S POLITICAL WORLD TURNED TOPSY TURVY!!!

It had been properly thought, that none but the moral blasphemers of this country had any fair pretensions to be considered *persecuted philosophers*. But, as if in derision of our claims to that distinction, our very persecutors are seeking to rob us of that title! Mr. Canning lately compared himself and Brother Ministers of the liberal party with Galileo and other persecuted philosophers; and so intensely did he seem to feel the hardship of his case, that some of the Honourable Members of the House of Commons, who persecute the philosophical Ministers, expected to have seen him begging pardon of the country for his share of the persecution of Carlile and his associates, and proposing to make common cause with them. Mr. Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his yearly financial statement, made on Monday the 13th inst., fell into the same strain with Mr. Canning, and jointly they have deprived me of all grounds of originality in what I had intended to say at different times and places with regard to my own case. If my persecutors complain of being persecuted philosophers, it is time for me to be silent upon the matter. But, at least, I call upon Mr. Canning and Mr. Robinson to cast their eyes towards Newgate, and see before they taste of the reality of being persecuted philosophers.

I will now present my readers with part of a speech, that will puzzle them, not a little, to divine, whether it was spoken by Mr. Robinson the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or spoken or written by Mr. Carlile the blasphemer.

“But, Sir, I think I may venture to say, that the violence of the storm has now passed away; that the clouds which impended over us, have begun to disperse; and that out of the very tempest of the elements, the atmosphere has become, to a certain degree, purified—(*Hear.*) If there were any thing in the situation in which we now stand, or the general despondency with which we have been so recently surrounded; if there were any thing obscure or mysterious in the nature of the one or the other; if they had arisen from causes which were beyond our comprehension,

then, Sir, indeed, there might be much more ground for uneasiness and apprehension on our parts, than appears to me to exist at this moment. But in all the discussions that have taken place on this subject in the course of the present session, although there has been, undoubtedly, great difference of opinion as to the precise extent to which different causes may have operated to produce these results; there has prevailed among us, I think, but one general opinion as to the nature of those causes, and the general operation they have had in producing such consequences. I confess, that to my mind that circumstance is a source of no ordinary consolation. There has been, in my opinion, in the course of those discussions which have taken place in the House, upon these subjects, during the present session, a great deal of very unnecessary contest between those who are sneeringly denominated the philosophers, and those who ascribe to themselves the more humble title of practical men—(*Hear.*) I say, Sir, “unnecessary contest” between these two classes of individuals, because I think it is the bounden duty of the Legislature to endeavour, at all times, to avail themselves of the sound reasoning and theory of the one, and to apply to that theory and reasoning the practical experience of the other—(*Hear, hear.*) And it is by a just application of such reasoning as well as such principles, to that sort of course which experience may enable us to determine upon; it is by a judicious combination of these two elements of all such calculations, that the House and the public may be empowered to form a just estimate of the situation in which we stand; and to arrive at an accurate conclusion, as to the best and most effectual mode of escaping from the difficulties in which we have been placed. If, indeed, they who have been preparing their minds, by the consideration and discussion of arguments of this kind, for forming such an estimate, are to be told that hope and reasoning are to be set aside, I know not at what fountain we are to drink, if we are to be driven from those springs where science and knowledge are necessarily the presiding deities—(*Hear, hear.*) And when, Sir, we find that through every class of the community the diffusion of knowledge is extending in a degree, that but half a century ago, would have been deemed absolutely impossible; are we, I ask, who sit here—some as the Ministers of the Crown, and all of us as legislating for the honour and advantage of our country; are we to be, alone, behind our countrymen in availing ourselves of the increasing lights of human intelligence; or are we to be the last in the race of intellectual improvement?—(*Cheers.*) But knowing, as we do, that the progress of universal knowledge must be gradual and limited, in the first instance; it is our duty, in the first instance, to take care that we be before our countrymen in these respects, in order that we may assist the judgment they are disposed to form, and that we may correct any errors into which they might otherwise prematurely fall, in regard to those

great questions which most nearly affect their own or the national interests. I know, Sir, that there are some gentlemen who deprecate this increasing thirst of information among all orders of men, and who think that this spread of knowledge is in fact a misfortune to the country—(*Hear.*) I know not, I confess, how that mind can be constituted which contemplates the progress of human knowledge as matter of regret or fear—(*Cheers.*) I own, Sir, that my impression is directly the reverse of that by which those gentlemen are actuated. It is evident, in my view of the matter, that the wider this diffusion of knowledge, the better people are informed; and the more they understand, the more likely they are to see and comprehend what is for their good, and the means by which that good is to be attained; the more likely they are to abstain from such means as would be prejudicial in their operation, and calculated rather for the prevention than the attainment of that good.—(*Hear.*) Besides, Sir, all men—(I was almost going to say, even that despised class “the philosophers,”)—(*a laugh*)—are agreed in the maxim, “that knowledge is power.”—(*Hear, hear.*) To my mind, therefore, this circumstance of the general diffusion of knowledge does lead, as respects the difficulties which have been lately produced among ourselves; and in respect of all difficulties of a similar kind that may be produced in times to come—to a very different conclusion from that unfavourable one which in some quarters appears to be entertained. If I find the people at large—if I find the Legislature—if I find the Government—all building their conclusions upon sound premises, I confess I think we may treat with comparative indifference the recurrence of those dangers by which we have lately been assailed—partly, because the chance of their recurrence is, itself, greatly diminished, and partly, because if they should recur, we shall be better enabled, and shall better know how to meet them.”

These are sentiments worthy of a Minister and a Legislator of the best class, worthy of a philosopher. They are mine. Whatever the Ministers might have learnt, or not learnt, from Mr. Cobbett about paper money, they have learnt, philosophy from me. But, for my own credit, perhaps a little vain, I cannot but think that they have gone no further than they have been driven.

RICHARD CARLILE.

PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BY THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF MORAL BLASPHEMERS.

THE most flagrant act of the present Ministers, at this time, is the keeping of those men in Newgate, while the same sort of

publications for which they are confined are in open and unmolested sale. Every means on our parts, as parties concerned, have been exhausted, to make the Ministers see this case in its proper light. Any thing like a month's unjust imprisonment would formerly have raised a Parliamentary outcry; but imprisonments of four, five, and six years have of late been so common for political purposes, that a detention for three years is looked at but as a trifle and a symptom of mercy. The last effort of the moral blasphemers in Newgate has been a petition to the House of Commons in the following words:—

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament Assembled.

The petition of Thomas Riley Perry, Richard Hassell, William Campion and John Clarke, prisoners in Newgate, in the City of London, sheweth,

That your petitioners are the only remaining victims of the late prosecutions for the publication of books which investigate the merits of the Christian Religion.

That though your petitioners are still detained in prison for no other offence than that publication, similar acts are now recognized by his Majesty's Government as lawful, or if not recognized as lawful, allowed to pass without opposition, and are daily and publicly occurring as matters of common trade, in various shops in this metropolis and throughout the country.

That your petitioners submit to your Honourable House, that their situation is an impeachment of the justice and humanity of his Majesty's Ministers, and a general stain on the administration of the laws of the country: and they therefore pray, that your Honourable House will grant consideration to their case, and apply such a remedy as to your Honourable House shall seem meet.

THOMAS RILEY PERRY.
RICHARD HASSELL.
WILLIAM CAMPION.
JOHN CLARKE.

The above petition was presented by Mr. Brougham, on the last day of February, who observed, that he considered the prayer proper and the case entitled to the consideration of his Majesty's Ministers. At the same time was presented the nonsensical petition of Captain Hardman about the print of the God, which was not thought worthy of an observation.

R. C.

THE REVEREND THOMAS BOWDLER, THE EXPUNGER OF NAUGHTINESS FROM OUR STANDARD BOOKS.

ABOUT six years ago, I was informed, that it was the intention of some editor and booksellers to publish an edition of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," with an omission of all the parts considered offensive, particularly with reference to his exposure of the rise and progress of Christianity. To counteract such a malicious and mercenary purpose, I published Gibbon's celebrated chapters on the rise and progress of the Christian Religion separately at three shillings. This pretended purification of Gibbon has been done by this Reverend Thomas Bowdler, who had before published to the same purpose a mutilated edition of Shakspeare's works. It is suggested to the Rev. Mr. Bowdler, as a test of his moral purity and sincerity, that he publish a new edition of a family Bible, with an erasure of all such passages as he has erased from Shakspeare and Gibbon; for so long as the Bible, as a whole, be read in families, there cannot be any thing found in Shakspeare or Gibbon that merits censure and omission.

R. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE REPUBLICAN."

SIR,

I HOPE you will have the kindness to insert in your "Republican" the following lines in answer to Mr. R. T. C. E. S., or rather, as an apology to that gentleman, respecting that unlucky wight Shebago. I feel much obliged to the gentleman for the notice he has been pleased to take of my letters, and likewise for the wise second-hand advice which he was so kind as to bestow on me gratis; and you, Sir, ought to feel his goodness in guarding "The Republican" from the dangers of energetic or pointed expression, and for the apology which he made for the appearance of my unstudied articles. I confess to the gentleman, and the world, that it would pain me to sorrow; and that I should feel the punishment of a fault, were I to use any language that might injure the reputation of "The Republican;" and let me insinuate, that I am not quite indifferent even to my own mode of writing.

But "truth against the world," Mr. Carlile; the fault may be imputed to you if you carelessly publish nonsense, balderdash, ribaldry, improper communication, or insipid common-place observation. I grant, that the language I use is nearly as strong as I can make it. I write from the heart, not from the head; and it may be said too, that it is rather poetical; but I beg leave to insist, that it is nevertheless just; and there have been, and are,

thousands who feel daily such miseries as no language of mine can express, or words convey an idea of. To be known, they must be felt! But it does not follow, that, because I endeavour to describe what I see or feel, that I am gloomy or dispirited; or that I am disposed to touch my own life or persuade others to destroy theirs. No; I could find vouchers for my cheerfulness and content of mind; but enough of this for the present. I inculcate not the gloomy doctrine of suicide. It is repugnant to my principles; it only suits fanatics, religious people, and abandoned *Aristocrats*. I could elucidate this by recent and well known instances; but I scorn it. If I advocated it with all the powers of Goëthe, there is a better reasoner, and a more powerful advocate than Goëthe, Mr. R. T. C. E. S., or all the Doctors of the Sorbonne, to plead against me: one, too, with whom, perhaps, I am on equal terms with the gentleman, with half the alphabet for a cognomen, God knows how he came by it; I mean NATURE.

I have not done with the article suicide, and with due deference and humility, I beg leave to say a few words on the tremendous subject of self-destruction, and the important one of self-preservation.

Self-preservation, they say, is the first law of Nature. Yet, we are taught to prefer death before dishonour; and I count him great who is ready to put the theory into practice, when a sufficient cause requires such a sacrifice. The following are axioms on the subject. A man who is reckless of his own life, will always command the lives of others. He who wishes to live with honour must not be afraid to die. To suffer is nobler than to cease to exist. To suffer with fortitude, and set danger, pain, and death, at defiance, is the greatest and utmost effort of the human mind. To consider our happiness as still belonging to the past, the present, and the future, is our duty. To esteem life *only* as it is useful and honourable; and to preserve it with determined resolution without being afraid to die. These are principles I would inculcate with all the ardour of a lover. But it does not appear that my hypercritic is acquainted with these simple Indian maxims, or that he has attended as a student, loungee, or familiar acquaintance, at the rooms, promenades, or toilet, of the above-mentioned lady—NATURE. He may, indeed, have seen her in her silks and finery; in the elegance of taste; in the pomp of state, or the lordly decorations of exorbitant wealth, or overweening power: figuring in a ball-room, gay as a peacock, or bending with smiles at a levee; but where she presides with step-dame frowns, forbidding peace, and banishing comfort; the scourge of poverty in her right hand—in her left, denunciations, and eternal oppression; where she rides indiscriminating in the whirlwind of despotism, and directs the unavoidable storm of calamity, and pale distress, and hopeless misery, he has not been. He

never felt the lash, nor saw it inflicted; else he never would say he did not believe such misery existed as I have only attempted to describe.

But I have felt more than I can describe, and have felt more for others than ever I had any reason to feel for myself; and those feelings kept me low, or were the cause which crushed me when I attempted to rise. If it were required, I could find *instantly* proofs of pure morality and vouchers for my independence of disposition; fearlessness of action, and regardlessness of consequences. Yet am I prone to error and sensible of it, open to conviction, and patient of reproof. I, too, have read the miserable, hacknied, mercenary, morals of the celebrated Dr. Franklin, whose plausible and thrifty maxims have debauched one quarter of the globe.* To me, at least, they are useless. I have no vices to support, no children to maintain, and worse, I have no stock or capital, wages or income, to squander or abuse. I never neglected my shop, nor left it, I had none to leave. Perhaps, for any thing I know to the contrary, Mr. R. T. C. E. S. has had one of his own, and neglected or left it, and may feel black adders of the mind stinging him for abandoning his worldly welfare, and now inflicts his sapient advice from the fulness of his knowledge, or the ebullition of his vanity. Such things have been. One thing, I am anxious to state to the readers of "The Republican." I am known through inadvertence. I was neither withheld by fear, nor stimulated by conceit, for remaining in the shade, or coming forward in *propria persona*. And if I have any friends, who are anxious on my account, this is to certify to them that no harm has accrued; that I am in no distress from the error, and only bent on gaining esteem by an equivalent of merit; on this let me stand or fall in "The Republican." I blush after writing the sentence; but I will not expunge it; let it stand against me. Mr., with the long string of initials, is not known, I presume. When he is ——— I shall be proud to clean his shoes, or brush his hat, though it or they should belong even to a Reverend, if his merits deserve such condescension from an unlettered Indian and Materialist, and I think Christian *humility* and *forbearance* could not require a greater mark of submission and respect.

Give me leave to notice, that I am at work as cheerful as the lark on a May morning, manufacturing a tale or work in my rough way out of very rugged materials, which, if ever it comes forth, may, perhaps, meet more enemies than friends. It will contain character, circumstances, time, and place, and will help

* I must confess that this sentence passes my understanding. I neither see its force nor its meaning. The morals compiled by Franklin are generally good, and have done much good. Let Shebago give specimens of the contrary character if he can.—R. C.

to illustrate what I have attempted to describe, and justify my assertions. I will display some miseries which I hope Mr. R. T. E. C. S. never will experience, and which I hope will be softened for others who must bear them.

Now, Sir, give me leave to subscribe myself Mr. R. T. C. E. S.'s much obliged humble servant, and let me really, *in forma pauperis*, beg, that he will not use any more of his insidious endeavours or doughty influence to eject me from the pages of "The Republican," of which I hold myself a legitimate correspondent, and ever so will remain, however circumstanced, a firm supporter, to the full extent of my capacity.

I am, Sir, with gratitude and respect, yours,

SHEBAGO.

A SHORT WAY OF SETTLING WITH MR. BEARD.

To Mr. Richard Carlile.

SIR,

March 11, 1826.

MR. BEARD has used a multitude of words to refute your argument, and that of Mr. Taylor on the falsehood of his religion, the whole of which will, before the torch of truth, melt like ice before a fire.

I do not like to use harsh expressions to a correspondent, but I here depart from that disposition for the sake of setting Mr. Beard a puzzle, which, if he fairly unriddle, I shall immediately say that he has the best of the argument. He says, or words to this effect (for I have not his letter now before me) that the Christian religion could not at first have spread so rapidly as it did unless it had been true.

Now, if Mr. Beard knows that Mahomedanism, Southcotianism, which are notoriously false, and many other falsehoods have spread more rapidly than Christianity, then must he be a knave to assert the contrary; and if he do not know this, then is he a simpleton in historical matters, and not worth disputing with. If, therefore, he can prove, that his conduct, in this instance, evinces nothing in common with either of those characters, then will Mr. Taylor's insinuations against him, as a Christian, be false and his, Mr. Beard's, arguments be the best of the two.

There can be little doubt that dishonesty must father the fault; but what think you of "the morning stars *singing* together for joy (at the creation) at the news of a new-born world?" What think you of this I say in the line of *Joblinism*? What should we do, if, instead of whirling round their orbits, our earth and the moon were caught, with several other planets, huddled together, at a morning concert? What a pretty pickle should we be in, and Mr. Beard likewise, were our sun to forsake its post to-morrow, to go, like a Christian, to a love-feast, or a singing party. Affairs would not only be "desperate in a certain quarter," but in all quarters. If the former assertion bears any resemblance to knavery, what think you of this in the way of foolery?

"I hope I don't intrude" in stepping in to say, that I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

CANDID.

ABEL BYWATER REFUTED, AND HIS DOCTRINE DESTROYED.

To Mr. Richard Carlile.

SIR,

Feb. 28, 1826.

PLEASE to give me leave, through the medium of your Republican, to correct the ideas of Abel Bywater, on the non-eternity of matter, as displayed in a letter to a friend, published in the *fifth* number of this present volume.

Abel seems to think, that matter cannot be eternal, because its mode of existence is not eternally the same. How, therefore, matter can be eternal, and not eternal, at the same time, Abel says, he will leave to the Materialists of the present day to explain. I recollect, that Abel's God has chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise. Now, how Abel can be one of those foolish things, and not foolish, at the same time, we will leave to the Bywaters of the present day to define. If the reasoning of Abel were applied to the non-existence of the human species, it would stand thus.—How mankind can continue to exist so long as they are asserted to exist, without standing always in one position, I will leave to the Materialists to explain. Wonderful Abel!

Abel says, that it is very easy to conceive the existence of matter without motion, from which he concludes, that matter must have had a cause distinct from itself, to put it in action. He says, that he can as easily conceive the earth at rest, as in motion. This may be the case with Abel, but it is not so with us. Were the earth to stop for one minute, it would cease to gravitate, and would instantly become a chaos. Witness a drop of water falling from the clouds. It assumes the shape of a globe when it begins to fall; but arrest its progress and it would instantly disperse into invisible particles. It is not so easy for a sane man to conceive that to be true, which he knows to be false. He cannot conceive that he is rich, when he knows that he is poor. He may say so, but he cannot believe so. Insane people can believe any thing, however ridiculous. I do not mean to assert it for a truth, but this goes very far towards proving that Abel is cracked.

Abel says that motion proves matter not infinite; for how, he says, can matter move, without a *medium* through which to pass. By the word *medium*, I take it for granted that Abel means *vacuum*. However, whether he means so or not, cannot Abel conceive the possibility of solids moving through liquids, and liquids through fluids? Did Abel never prove this by throwing a stone at a bird? I have very strong doubts whether Abel would like to put his doctrine to the test at the expence of his head. I will not undertake to assert that there is a vacuum in Abel's head, but whether there is or not, I think that a shot would find its way through; which would entirely spoil Abel's doctrine about not moving where there is no *vacuum*, or no *medium*.

In trying to prove that matter is not infinite, Abel says, also, that matter cannot bound itself; and therefore, says he, it is bounded by something that is *not material*. This is saying, plainly, that matter is bounded by *something* which is in itself *nothing*. It proves what we have always asserted, namely, that matter is unbounded. Wonderful Abel!

In speaking about human intelligence, Abel says, that it cannot be produced by an eternal effect, because, he says, every effect must be preceded

by a cause; yet, wonderful to tell, he makes his idol into an eternal effect without a cause, and makes him as an eternal effect, effect all those things which he says cannot be effected. Astonishing Abel! Abel says, that matter cannot communicate what it does not possess, and therefore it cannot communicate intelligence. I suppose that this is the reason why Abel cannot communicate any thing worth knowing to us. However, if ever Abel ate a hearty meal when he was hungry, I have no doubt that he felt such a pleasure as the victuals did not feel, whether it can communicate or not. What unlucky arguments has Abel produced.

Dear friend, says Abel, these are the arguments that satisfy my mind that matter is not eternal; and I am *bold* to say that they are such as no Atheist in the world can refute.—He is *bold* you hear after all! Then I suppose we may speak of him in the language of the poet, and say, that he is—

Unskill'd to argue, in dispute yet loud,
Bold without caution, without honours proud.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

CANDID.

Note.—Mr. Holmes, of Sheffield, has published at twopence a pamphlet containing a summary of the arguments between Materialists and Spiritualists under the title of “A CANDID APPEAL TO MEN OF REASON AND REFLECTION on the subjects that are discussing between Spiritualists and Materialists.” This little summary is remarkably well drawn up, and deserving of extensive circulation.—R. C.

TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE.

GOD DISTURBED!!!

SIR,

March 3, 1826.

PERHAPS the following anecdote may serve to shew what idea some fanatics hold of their Deity.

There are some peculiarities in the sect founded by Mr. T. Cowherd, of Manchester, that very few persons are acquainted with; the principal of which are, a different construction and interpretation of the Scriptures quite opposed to all other sects of Christians, and an abstinence from animal food. Some few years ago, I went to Lambeth to hear one of their preachers, who by trade was a hatter. I entered the place with a friend, a few minutes after the service had begun. The preacher left off his prayer to address me, having seen me once before there. My friend sat down, and I remained standing, when, from the “Knave’s Pedestal,” he addressed me nearly in the following words:—“I do not thank that Gentleman to come in at this time, and *disturb the gaseous spirit of the Almighty, that now pervades this place*, he must be a blackguard, just emerged from a tavern with the fumes of liquor upon him: yea, I repeat it again, he must be a blackguard, just come from a bawdy-house, to disturb this assembly, and I hope he will not be guilty of such conduct again,” &c. He resumed his prayer. I made him a reverential bow, sat me down, and heard the service throughout.

My friend remonstrated with me for being so calm and making no reply. Oh no, said I, I hope I know better manners than to contend with such a character, which would have subjected me to his vengeance, for breaking the peace of the congregation as he would have termed it.

There were few remarks in his discourse which amused and pleased me. "First," said he, "you may tell people of the pains of hell, and the misery that they shall endure if they repent not, and they heed it not; because it is distant; but tell them they shall be served out here with punishment à-la-Scroggins (and here he put himself in the pugilistic posture), and they would fear immediately." The next was to those who had attended his teachings a long time, thus—"I do not want you to be always attending here: have you not learnt enough by this time to teach as well as me. Go, and teach others, and let your places be supplied by those who have not heard and want instruction. I do not want to hold you like the Methodees, in everlasting leading-strings; for you must be dolts, indeed, if you have not gained sufficient knowledge by this time."

JAMES LOWE.

TO MR. RICHARD CARLILE, LONDON.

SIR,

Norwich, Feb. 15, 1826.

I SHOULD be greatly obliged by your informing me who the Mr. Sergeant Firth is that makes so conspicuous and ridiculous a figure in your number for February the 3d. I have a shrewd guess he is the same personage who figured so prominently, and with equal violence and folly, as a red-hot Jacobin, in Norwich thirty years ago. The man I allude to was a sort of second or third-rate worstead weaver till he was near thirty years old; remarkable for the length and ferocity of his sable visage; for the coarseness of his manners; the vulgarity and profaneness of his language, and a frightful hereditary irascibility of temper. At the time I speak of, he and many more used to meet at a news-room, to read the daily papers, when party rancour was at its height—i. e. during the trials of Tooke, Hardy, &c. for high treason. During that stormy season, Firth, or Black Billy, as he was called in derision, was a real terror to his associates at these diurnal political assemblies by the outrageousness of his seditious vituperations of the conduct and measures of the English Government, and his unguarded idolatry of the proceedings in France, lest, by his Jacobinical violence, he might involve them in the Government prosecutions and persecutions at that time so frequent.

I well recollect, that Firth's sitting-room was adorned with prints of the most eminently bloody of the French Revolutionists—Danton, Robespierre, Marat, &c. But the most curious illustration of Billy's real courage and seditious spirit was exhibited in the matter of a print of the late King of this country, for which its original publisher had been prosecuted, and, I think, underwent the penalties of fine and incarceration. This print represented the King with the turban of the Grand Turk on his head, intimating thereby, I opine, that he was as great a tyrant. Firth brought this print one morning, and proposed to hang it up in the news-room. The propriety of this measure was discussed and finally rejected by the other persons present. Firth, as usual, fell into great wrath: at

evening, you were particularly honoured for your exertions, and your worthy imprisoned shopmen were not forgotten.

If the pious Clergymen of this City were to know that such a meeting took place, they will no doubt be very much grieved to think that so many souls are going to hell, or what they will say is the broad road to it; but if they will consider the subject properly, they will not need to grieve; because, according to their own doctrine, none can go to hell but those whom *their* god, for his own glory, has called into existence for that very purpose. Of what use then is their preaching and praying? They can never bring to heaven one who is ordained to be damned, and the holy elect will go to heaven without any preaching or praying from the Clergy, Oh! how contemptible does the Christian idolatry appear, both in theory and practice.

I am very anxious to know if you have any expectations of recovering the property of which you were robbed, and cruelly plundered, for Christ's sake, or if you expect any remuneration for what was damaged.* I shall be glad to hear that you have, but I have little hope. Christians show little mercy to those who cannot believe their absurdities; they are just like their old God Jehovah, glorified in cruel punishments. With best respects, believe me, Sir, your sincere friend,

J. AFFLECK.

* All is going well, and I am in a very fair way to *ex officio* the Attorney-General.—R. C.

TO MR. R. CARLILE.

SIR,

Aberdeen, Jan. 19, 1826.

HAVING observed, in "The Republican," two letters purporting to be an exposure of the secrets of Odd Fellows, and as there seems to be a considerable difference in the mode of making, and not the same words as that used among the Lodges in Scotland, I have taken the liberty to forward for your perusal a full and complete exposure of Scotch Odd Fellows.

The dresses and ceremonies, as described in the first letter addressed to you on the subject, are much the same as those in use throughout Scotland; and also the form of admittance until the candidate is "seized by the collar by the Warden." Instead of a Warden, a person is always elected who is possessed of considerable bodily strength, and is called the Conductor. The Warden is stationed for another part of the play, as will be seen hereafter. Your correspondent observes, that "as the new Noodle enters, all the brethren stamp and clap, and make all possible noise;" but here, after allowing the blindfolded candidate to enter the Lodge, profound *silence* is most strictly attended to. When he has proceeded within the Lodge about two yards, and the door shut behind him, the strong hand of the Conductor forces him backwards against it, saying, "Presumptuous mortal, stand and know the dreadful trials thou hast to pass; show me the fortitude of a man, for if fatherless children or widows thou hast injured, or helpless virgins' innocence violated, now is the time that remorse of conscience will stare thee in the face, and black despair will wring thy very soul." After a short pause, the brethren exclaim with loud voices, "Go on and bind the victim to the weary stake." The Conductor exclaims,

"Ye infernal spirits, come away,
And make this mortal our commands obey."

then takes the chain from off a nail or hook on the back of the door, putting it round him in such a way as to keep both arms fast. He is then removed right round, and sharply forced backwards the whole length or breadth of the Lodge, until he is brought up against a form or piece of plank, erected for the purpose; he is then bound to this form or plank with the chain, when the Conductor resumes—"Hark! the agonising groans of those already tortured to despair!" The members groan in seeming anguish. "Stir up the furnace, let it be excessively hot," is exclaimed: clashing of swords is heard, and an imitation of thunder from a large sheet of white iron suspended by a piece of twine, which a person beats in order to render the scene the more awful. After silence is somewhat restored, the Conductor again resumes:—"Sevenfold let it be heated; for no refuge for this stranger can here be found. There is fire on thy right hand, and water on thy left, behind thee a yawning gulf, and before thy face a flaming sword." Then another short pause takes place. The Conductor turns round with his face towards the Noble Grand, and asks, "Brethren, shall we desist from this our *lawful right*, or shall we still go on?" No answer being made, he changes his tone, and says,

"Ye favourite brethren, now appear,
Conduct the stranger unto yonder throne,
'Tis there the best of secrets shall be known."

The Lodge being all previously masked, the candidate is now loosened from the stake, and the bandage removed from his eyes, a person being carefully stationed with an apparatus made in the shape of a bullock's head, in which there is a candle, and by putting pounded rosin therein, then blowing through a pipe fixed in the back part of it, causes fire and smoke to issue forth at mouth, eyes, &c. This is what they call "the Devil's Head." And it seldom fails in having the desired effect of frightening, which is all that is aimed at in the whole performance. The favourite brethren that appear are two men with naked swords, who after getting clear of the fire and smoke of the Devil's Head, he observes, only by their taking fast hold of each of his shoulders, and addressing him in rather an unfavourable tone:—"Stranger, walk this way, and fear no evil"—pointing to the office-bearers, one of them says, "Pay respect to, and particularly observe all those ancient characters as you pass along." He is first taken to the Vice-Grand, then to the Secretary, to both of which he must "make a very low bow." He is now introduced to the worthy Warden, and after making the very low bow, is desired to help him up; he being in the character of a "very old man," must be softly dealt with, and is accordingly instructed "to be careful not to hurt him." After some struggle, he is at length got up, when the following dialogue takes place:—

"Friend, how old art thou?—*Noodle*. Twenty.

"*Warden*. A very good age for an Odd Fellow. Art thou married?—*Noodle*. No or yes.

"*Warden*. Can you sing any?—*Noodle*. Yes.

"*Warden*. Let me hear you.—(*Noodle sings*.)

"*Warden*. Can you whistle any?—*Noodle*. Yes.—(*whistles*.)

"*Warden*. Very fine whistling for an Odd Fellow. Can you dance any?—*Noodle*. A little.—(*dances*.)

"*Warden*. Very fine dancing for an Odd Fellow."

I have heard very indecent questions put to the Noodle, and, wonderful to tell, he would expose the most secret transactions with his mistress, to the no small satisfaction of a pack of scoundrels, who, although a few well-thinking men would stand up and oppose it, could always muster a major-

city of votes for its abominable continuance. This is only practised with those who are simple. The Warden, after putting those questions which he thinks proper, being in general left to his own option, says, "Now, my son, remember what I have now to say unto you; the best and the wisest of men in all ages and in all countries have become Odd Fellows. Adam, our first parent, was an Odd Fellow. Solomon the Wise was an Odd Fellow. Jesus Christ was also an Odd Fellow. Having become man, and not having his equal upon earth, rendered him the greatest; therefore, be advised by his precepts, to be just and true, and never do to man what you would that they should not do to you. Be wise unto salvation. Be charitable to all mankind, who shall seek from you; but more particularly to an Odd Fellow. Now carefully observe, above all that I have said unto you, to BE CIRCUMSPECT: lend me your hand, and help me down." He is then taken to the Vice Grand, who requests his hand, and making him clench it, seizes it with his right, causes him to give three knocks on the table, and orders him to be put to the dungeon, if another be to be made. This dungeon is a small room adjoining the Lodge, where he waits in suspense until the other has gone through all these ceremonies. If there be no other Noodle, he proceeds to the Noble Grand, who all the while has been kept secret, inclosed with a screen, the front of which is drawn up with cords on each side. The two favourite brethren, which I have before mentioned, now cross their swords before the Noodle. The right-hand supporter of the Noble Grand says, "Put your left hand on these two sharp-pointed instruments of death, and your right hand towards Heaven, and repeat after me the following oath and obligation—"I do most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, by these two sharp-pointed instruments of death, that I will hale, conceal, and never reveal any of the secrecy that shall be revealed to me at this time, or at any time hereafter, pertaining to Odd Fellows, or Odd Fellowship, and that I will always endeavour to create the mirth and promote the harmony of the same—*Upon my honour.*" He is then desired to kiss the two swords. The right-hand supporter then begins a song of four verses, in which all the singers in the Lodge join; it commences with "Brother, attentive stand," &c.; during the last verse, the right and left-hand supporters draw upon the cords, and the Noodle is shown the Noble Grand, who is in apparent sleep; he must be roused, and the right-hand supporter gives him a push, crying with a loud voice, "Most Noble," the Vice-Grand giving one knock with his mallet, he gets another push and a call. The Vice-Grand tries him with another knock. But the third push being a pretty rough shake, makes him say,

"Why do ye disturb my repose?—R. H. S. A brother, Most Noble.

"N. G. Ah! how came that stranger here?—R. H. S. By the recommendation of a worthy friend and brother.

"N. G. Have you given him the obligation?—R. H. S. Yes."

The Noble then gives three knocks, the Vice repeats them. The Noble addresses the Noodle thus:—"Look round and see if you be able to recognize the person that brought you hither; you cannot know men by appearance; but by actions. Prove yourself good by just actions, and you will certainly merit the esteem of all virtuous men. In the mean time, for my own part, I think you look very much like an Odd Fellow. Let this be a lesson for you not hereafter to judge men by external appearances, lest the present that you are now among prove deceitful. Make a very low bow." The brethren all unmask, and with a smile, the Noble Grand shakes hands with him, and congratulates him on becoming a brother Odd Fellow. He receives what is called the charge; being told to be loyal;

not to sing any indecent song, nor utter any toast or sentiment tending to indecency; to use his utmost exertions in bringing forward members, for which he will be rewarded with a silver medal, bearing an inscription, and the insignia of the Noble Grand Order. Next follows the sign, pass-word, grip, and secret word. The sign is to put the fore finger of the right hand to the right side of the nose, which is to signify "Silence:" from thence let the hand fall down to the left breast with the fingers spread, and this also is to signify "UPON MY HONOUR," which is the pass-word. The grip is to put the point of the thumb to the ends of the fore and middle fingers, while the brother puts his fore and middle fingers through between your thumb and fingers; bringing the thumb and fingers also together forms the grip. The secret word is "CIRCUMSPECT,"* and is, they say, in "an odd chapter, and an odd verse, in the Bible, and nowhere else to be found in Sacred Writ." He is then desired to settle with the Clerk, and take his seat, when he may call for what *drink* he pleases, payable on delivery. Next and finally follows a Lecture. But few Lodges that ever I visited used it, and I know there are a great many that never heard it; but as it is in practice, I shall enable you to instruct those that are ignorant of it, by giving the whole "crap and branch."

" LECTURE.

" N. G. Who was the first Odd Fellow?—Sec. Adam, being the first man, and without a helpmate.

N. G. Where was the first Lodge held?—Sec. In Paradise.

" N. G. Where was the second Lodge held?—Sec. In Solomon's Temple.

" N. G. Was Solomon an Odd Fellow?—Sec. Yes.

" N. G. How do you prove that?—Sec. He having exceeded all men in wisdom.

" N. G. Where is that certified?—Sec. It is particularly declared in the Holy Bible.

" N. G. Who was the third as recorded in Holy Writ?—Sec. Jesus Christ.

" N. G. How do you prove that?—Sec. He became man that we should not die in the spirit, but live and glorify God here and hereafter; he having instructed us in the most sufficient and necessary moral precepts to lead us through life, and also diligently warned us to flee from the wrath to come, which forms to us the foundation of real and collective truths on which the basis of all society is erected; more particularly that of Odd Fellowship.

" N. G. Are there more Odd Fellows' Lodges besides those in Britain?—Sec. Yes, there is one in Cadiz, in Spain; and one in Quebec, in North America; and also many others throughout the world.

" N. G. What is meant by the first clause of the Conductor's speech which ends saying, that 'black despair will wring his very soul'?—Sec. It is an endeavour to find out if any such crimes have been committed, and if so, on the confession of which he would be thrust out from among us, and the respectability of the most noble of institutions maintained.

" N. G. What is represented when he says, 'Stir the furnace,' &c.?—Sec. It brings to our mind the trial of the three holy children, who refused to worship the image that the wicked King Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura.

* Exodus, chap. xxiii. ver. 13.

"N. G. What does the last part of his speech represent, when he calls for the favourite brethren to appear, &c.?—Sec. It represents Christ calling upon and conducting us to the throne of God, when he disclosed to the world the grand and incontrovertible doctrine of immortality, which before his day was held from mortal understanding; therefore it is the duty of every Odd Fellow to practise virtue, and shun vice; and may God, through Christ, bless us in all undertakings, and conduct us into everlasting glory. Amen."

I have now gone through the whole of the Scotch system of Odd Fellowship, which, with that already exposed by your two former correspondents, will, I think, give it a complete death-blow, and I trust, that, no man of common sense will pity its downfall. There is not, perhaps, among the whole of the secret sects, a more destructive one for morals than this; for a man may enter the Lodge sober, but it seldom happens that he is able to leave it so. Songs and toasts form a prominent part of the night's business, and as their assemblies are generally held in public-houses, something they say must be done for their good, the good of which always renders the majority scarcely able to rise from their seats; hence, in their discussions, much tumult and warmth is often shown. Times without number, I have witnessed blows exchanged, and the whole Lodge in uproar.

I have also belonged to other Societies, which have oaths and secrecy, such as the Gardeners, and Wrights, in both of which I held offices for years. Gardenerly resembles Masonry, and in Scotland the Lodges are equally numerous. If you intend to continue the exposure of secret sects, I shall have no hesitation to lend you a hand with these two;* I think we shall be able to pull down the "lofty cedars of Lebanon," and make them somewhat like the "lowly hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" in fact, we shall "Dress" the word AND not keep it. We shall also teach the Wrights, that the story about working in a "garret at Joppa," making "tents," is not equal to Republicanism, Free Inquiry, and the Liberty of the Press.

I am, Sir, with much respect,
Your admirer and friend,

CLEOMEDES.

P. S. "The Philosophy of History," by M. de Voltaire, will, I trust, be among your earliest publications for the Joint Stock Company. If you are not in possession of a copy of that valuable work, I will forward one for you. It was printed for J. Allcock, near St. Paul's, anno 1766.

* It will be thankfully received.

R. C.

TO MR. R. CARLILE.

SIR,

Aberdeen, March 4, 1826.

WHEN I formerly addressed you, I little thought that your persecutors would have so unrelentingly kept up their spite in the continuation of your confinement to the end of *six* years; could any thing demonstrate more completely the true Christian spirit of all those concerned in your unwarrantable detention. They have to all intents verified to you "in the flesh" their favourite principle, which says, "he that believeth not shall be

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damned," by putting you in "utter darkness," a wicked gaoler much resembling a devil, and his angels the turnkeys continually tormenting you, while you was surrounded with unfortunate felons, "weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth," is to us, sufficient proof of your bold, firm, and determined resolution, to continue the grand work of truth, by fair and impartial inquiry; otherwise you would, amidst the wheezy acts, wild ravings, and barbarous insults, which were continually heaped upon you, have fallen into insignificance, and become the prey of the greatest pest in society.

I believe there are few that espouse the cause with openness, that are not persecuted less or more; for my own part, I have had to withstand a considerable share of it throughout the circuit of my acquaintances. My relations have also (with a very few exceptions) indulged a despicable clamour against me these number of years; and to this day, a few of them still continue their holy vengeance with unabating fury; in consequence of which, I now take the liberty to inform them all, that I am getting daily more confirmed in those opinions, which they ignorantly despise, and hereby offer to defend them by letter against any Priest or his infatuated bigot in this city, that may choose to come forward in hope of my refutation.

These twenty years past I have always thought, that the various religions of all the nations of the world were a mere juggle, a compact contrived among Priests, afterwards adopted and maintained by Kings, being found efficacious in uprooting liberty, and effectually suited for the subjugation of the human race. When we search ancient history for their commencement, we then find, that the Priests were the first legislators, who ruled in the name of their Gods: and if the least credit could be given to the writings of those dark ages, they extended tyranny to the most shocking degree—and the more their Governments were divine, the more they became ridiculous and abominable. But among all the histories of the various nations, none is so replete with cruel murders, and wanton debaucheries, as that recorded by the Jews. Throughout the whole account of that sanguinary people, we meet with little else than one continuation of excess, that surpasses the bounds of ordinary belief.

Let us pause a little and examine only a small portion of the numberless atrocities committed by that savage race; let us try to fathom the pitch of degradation and wickedness to which the minds of these monsters had arrived when they stood with ecstasy, and witnessed their fellow-creatures "put under saws; and under harrows of iron; and under axes of iron; and pass through the brick-kiln." When we figure to ourselves the groans, the doleful lamentations, and the vain pleadings for mercy, which must have issued from the mouths of these unfortunate creatures, our feelings become *amort*, and oblige us to abandon the recital with inward horror and disgust. But these, O Jews and Christians! are but an atom among the immensity of barbarities committed by your ferocious ancestors, in which history the same are recorded, but artfully twisted from the blood-thirsty assassin, and falsifying Priest, and placed upon the imaginary God of your credulity.

Allow me to return a little further to their history, until I examine a few of the prodigies of Moses, their first leader, whose allegories are in exact resemblance with those of Bacchus, a fabulous character, whose festivals appear to have been held in much esteem many hundreds of years before either Moses or the Jewish books were known.* Moses is said to

* It appears incontestible, that the fable of the prodigies of Bacchus, have been copied or collected by the Jews and made part of their sacred books. I know, that both Jews and Christians have contended that the history of Moses is the real

have been saved from the waters, in a small box, which was made by his mother. He had a magic wand, or rod, which he changed into a serpent at will. He enjoyed light during the dark of the night from a pillar of fire, that guided his footsteps and those of his followers. He had a sacred box, or ark, which he carried along with him. He passed the Red Sea dry-footed; and he had his laws or commandments engraven on two stone tables. With his God he was quite familiar, and gave or took advice as appeared necessary. In a word, he was apparently his intimate companion, with whom he conversed jocularly. These prodigies are all so wonderful, so inconsistent with the occurrences of our times, and so opposite to reason, that it is ridiculous in any man possessed with ordinary capacity to believe them. Yet, I lament to see thousands of my fellow-creatures, wasting a great part of the short time they have to remain in existence, and following with greediness this terrible delusion.

It is certainly an important work to correct the bewildered mind, by dispelling from it the tales of those ignorant, rapacious robbers, who appeared to have had nothing in view but the destruction of every creature on earth; and who, having created to themselves a God suitable to their wild imaginations, have arrogantly made this imaginary idol to become the author of their awful crimes, and to this day continue imposing on the ignorant through credulity, on the sensible by violence, their fantastical nonsense, and extorting for it the richest productions of every clime.

I am of opinion, that were you to publish a quantity of tracts,* which could be sold for a penny each, containing dialogues suitable for those that never read any thing in opposition to religion, that they would be productive of much good, and stimulate the sale of more valuable works; few Christians will venture to purchase a book of any value when they are taught to believe that it contains nothing but doctrines calculated for their eternal destruction: but if we had a quantity of these little messengers,

one, and that of Bacchus only the fable; but it is certain, that, in Egypt, Asia, and Greece, Bacchus was acknowledged as a demi-god long before the Jewish books were known. His history is of so great antiquity, that the most ancient writers, in favour of the Jewish and Christian churches, suppose him to have been Noah, or to have lived about that time. It would have been impossible for the Greeks to have taken the idea of Bacchus, from the book of the Jewish laws, which they did not understand, and of which they had not the least knowledge; a book that was exceedingly scarce, even among the Jews, for, in the reign of king Josias, there could only be found *one copy*! and that almost entirely lost during their slavery in Chaldea and Asia, a time, when Greece and other eastern nations re-echoed with the orgies of Bacchus. It was not until the flourishing times of Athens and other republics of Greece that the writings of the Jews became known, which proves their scarcity long before this period Bacchus was held among the Greeks and other nations in great esteem. I now quote that part of his history which is in exact resemblance with that of Moses. The Orphic verses say, "that he was saved from the waters in a small box, which was called Misem, in remembrance of this adventure; that he was instructed in the secrets of the gods; that he had a wand, which he changed into a serpent at will; that he passed the Red Sea dry-footed; that when he went to India, he and his army enjoyed the sun-shine during the night; that he touched with his enchanting wand the waters of the rivers Orontes and Hydaspes; and that these waters separated, and left him a free passage; it is even said, that he stopped the course of the sun and moon, and he wrote his laws upon two stone tables."

* From the expenditure of a portion of religious plunder in religious tracts, the people of this country look to have such tracts given to them: and who on our side is to pay for them? We have them for sale.

R. C.

there is no doubt of their wide circulation, and as little for the happy consequences that would follow on reading them.

I was greatly astonished on seeing an insignificant letter published in the 3rd Number of the present Volume of "The Republican," against Shebago, from an upstart critic and correspondent, calling himself R. T. C. E. S. I have only to say against that production, that I agree with your Glasgow friend, in saying, that it proves the ignorance, impudence, and vanity of the author.

I am, Sir,

Yours in friendship,

JOHN SMART.

TO MR RICHARD CARLILE.

SIR,

Sheffield, February 26, 1826,

You will agree with me, that it is the duty of every man to detect fraud, and to expose it if possible: for this purpose I address you: and, the gross perversion of truths I am about to exhibit, will show, how little faith can be placed on the veracity of historians.

There is an edition of "Goldsmith's History of England," in sixpenny numbers, published at the Caxton Press, 38, Newgate Street; with a continuation to 1825, by John Watkins, L. L.D. and in that continuation the following circumstances are stated as facts! In speaking of the Manchester massacre, after mentioning the arrest of the "noted demagogue Hunt," he adds: "while this was going on, some of the cavalry cut at the banners with their sabres, which occasioned so much disorder, that four persons were killed, and forty four wounded."* Now if I remember right, there were TWENTY ONE killed, and upwards of TWO HUNDRED wounded by sabres and bayonets only; not reckoning the bruises and wounds from being trampled upon. In mentioning the arrest and trial of Thistlewood and his companions not a word is said about Edwards! This faithful historian does not even mention the trial of R. Carlile; though he has not forgot to notice the passing of the "Six Acts." In speaking of the trial of the Queen, he says, her defensive evidence, however, was, in substance, nakedly negative; and the main body of facts, which had been distinctly stated, † and positively sworn to, remain untouched. He also adds, "the verdict had in fact been pronounced upon the substantial matter of charge," (meaning the Peers votes) also "this unaccountable termination of the bill was celebrated as a triumph, and even regarded as an acquittal; though nothing could be more evident, than that the abandonment of the bill, was a mere matter of prudence and expe-

* History of England, page 692.

† Ibid, 698.

diency.*" Mentioning the death of Buonaparte, he says, "the news of his death made little impression upon the minds of those who heard it; and even in France they received the news of his death unmoved.†" Mentioning the Queen's Funeral and the contest at Cumberland Gate, he says, "in this contest, *one* of the crowd was killed.‡" I was on service on that day, and know that *two* were killed. Speaking of Castlereagh he says, "though few public men had been more the subject of obloquy when alive, *all parties* concurred in lamenting his dissolution. As a proof of his integrity, it was well observed, that he laboured for thirty years in the service of his country, ruined a robust constitution, broke a lofty spirit, destroyed a noble understanding, and met an untimely death, without adding one shilling to his patrimonial fortune, out of the treasure of his country. § "!!! This requires no comment.

I have also to say on the subject of which Mr. Simson, and R. T. C. E. S. entertain such different ideas, that several of your readers here were tired of Shebago, not because his articles were devoid of merit; but because they like argument better than declamation.

I remain, Dear Sir, yours in the cause of truth,
W. V. HOLMES.

THE FIFTY-NINTH ORATION.

Being in refutation of the Bishop of London's eleventh proposition on the miracles of Christ. Delivered before the Christian Evidence Society, on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 1826., by the Reverend Robert Taylor, A. B. and M. R. C. S. Secretary of the Society.

THE PROPOSITION.

"The miracles performed by our Lord, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power."

MR. CHAIRMAN, Members of the Society of Christian Evidence; Ladies and Gentlemen,

If there be such an obligation as that of rational Piety incumbent upon man. If there's a power above, "and that there is, all nature cries aloud through all her works," the first, the last of duties must be, that we should entertain a respectful awe of that power, nor suffer ourselves on any evidence or any authority

* History of England p. 699.

† Ibid. p. 703.

‡ Ibid. p. 702.

§ Ibid. p. 705.

whatever to ascribe thereto unworthy things, nor to commit against our own reason, so outrageous a violence as to take for divine or supernatural malefactions, what the calm application of that reason may detect, to be nothing more than the base and self-serving inventions of wicked and deceitful men.

Of all delinquencies that can degrade our noble nature (and our nature is noble) the moral crime of surrendering our understandings, to the belief of any thing naturally revolting to us, is the most extensively mischievous, the most fatally flagitious. It is the suicide of the soul, and all religions which make belief a virtue and draw on our credulity, may, therefore, without an allegory be said, to be founded on the fall of man. Yes! Fallen indeed, is that poor man who dare not or will not exercise the faculties which nature hath given him, but is condemned by his own folly and the craft of priests to wear through life, the swathing bands of a perpetuated infancy, and to tremble at forty years of age at what he should have laughed at, at fourteen.

In entering upon the matter now to be discussed according to the method I have ever observed, I concede every thing which my respected opponents (and they shall be most respected who most oppose) can wish to have conceded; I admit every thing but the point at issue. I desire to set open, the widest possible door to the power of refutation, that if they will not enter, the world may see, and themselves may feel, that what I offer unanswerable is truth, and they cannot refute it.

"The miracles performed by our Lord, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power." Such is the proposition on which we are now met to determine, whether it be true or false. That we are competent to determine this question, is as apparent as that the question at all concerns us, or else, it would be our duty whenever we go to church to go to sleep, that we might receive without any capacity of resistance, whatever our priests should offer us. But that day has gone by, and your monstrously learned men brimfull of Greek and Latin, can no longer arrogate the exclusive prerogative, of forming just judgments and rational conclusions, nor be thought to possess the knowledge of many heads, while we carry one a piece on our own shoulders. I quibble not on words, I have never found fault with any man's education; he who speaks so as to be understood, speaks grammatically, he who speaks the truth, speaks eloquently, nor can the art of human oratory deliver a richer period, or music compose a sweeter strain, than in that which the heart and tongue perform their parts together.

To DEMONSTRATE however, was more than the good Bishop of London, or any other advocate of Christianity need have undertaken. Historical facts do not in their nature admit of demonstrative evidence, and the facts of Christianity will be sufficiently established to ensure the conviction of all ingenuous inquirers, if their evidence be such as we should admit to be sufficient to es-

tablish any other facts whatever, what is an evidence proportionate to their importance and homogenous with their nature. We have no right to brand with the opprobrium of scepticism, those whose faith may require a much greater degree of evidence, than would be sufficient to establish our own. There are men, and they too of much higher reputation for the sincerity and strength of their faith, than it has ever been my good fortune to attain, who would not hesitate to tell you that they would not believe the gospel themselves, nor require other men to do so, unless it could be proved by the most abundant and overwhelming evidence, and unless (as they say) "the falsehood of the miracles, would be absolutely more miraculous than the miracles themselves, whereas, I, I most solemnly profess, that I should believe all the miracles at once, if any one of them had the least degree of evidence that ever was in the world. If it be probable, if it be possible, that Christianity be true, I would not reject it."

The Bishop actually overdoes us with the supererogation of his evidences; and though he sets out with telling us, (what I admit is certainly information which we were not aware of) that the preceding propositions contain very convincing proofs of the divine mission of Christ; and, though in the last proposition we had the most convincing proof of all, yet we are now entering upon what the Bishop assures us is *undoubtedly* the most convincing proof. Miracles! Miracles by the bushel-full. His Lordship's hospitality would kill a hecatomb to give us a luncheon—a millionth part of this provision—doth laugh to scorn the power of human digestion.—"Christ cured the most inveterate diseases," says the good Bishop, "he made the lame to walk; he opened the eyes of the blind," though I am told it is all one to a blind man whether his eyes are open or shut.—"He opened the ears of the deaf; he cast out devils; he walked upon the water; he fed five thousand persons with a few small fishes—and even," says the Bishop, "even raised the dead to life again." I like not this *even*—it covers, or rather *discovers* a great deal of scepticism; it implies that *this* miracle, at least, cost Almighty Power an effort, or had in it something more miraculous, or was more extraordinary and uncommon than any of the other miracles. Whereas we find in the Scriptures themselves, and in ecclesiastical history, wholly as credible as the Scriptures themselves, that nothing was more common, not only Christ, but his Apostles, and their successors, to the third and fourth generation, were in the daily, or rather nightly practice of raising the dead (as St. Irenæus affirms, "*On necessary occasions, and men so raised had lived afterwards among them many years.*"—Quoted in Middleton's "Free Inquiry," p. 196). And on one occasion we learn, from the Holy Gospel of St. Matthew, that when Christ was engaged and could not attend to call them up by name as he did Lazarus, a whole church-yard of corpses got up of their own accord, paid a

visit to their friends in Jerusalem, and then went back and buried themselves. It is, indeed, highly probable, that one who performed so many surgical cures, as Christ did, must have studied anatomy, which accounts for his saying in the 11th chapter of St. John, "*I am a resurrection man.*" He certainly called Lazarus with a very loud voice, and by hook or by crook, the corpse was forthcoming, but I doubt whether the Bishop himself would say that it was by the strength of his lungs that he performed the operation.

The distinction between *great* and *small* miracles; but, above all, the assertion, that "*The miracles of Christ have such evidence as is not to be equalled in any other instance, and such as Christ is fully competent to prove, the reality of the greatest miracle that ever was performed.*" Though in the language of one who was a Bishop of London, and who ought to have been a man, is language which shelter itself by so close a proximity to downright idiocy that understanding disdains the care of refutation, and humanity blushes for the impotence of mind to which its refutation could be necessary. First, define a miracle as the effect of Almighty Power, then speak of one miracle as being greater than another, and the miracles of Christ as having evidence beyond that of the greatest miracles that ever were, and ye are innocent! This is the Gospel spoon-meat; suck down this, and ye shall grow up unto Christ Jesus in all things. Nobody will ever be able to shake your faith. Be sure on it, neither the reasonings of Paine, nor the sarcasms of Voltaire, will ever penetrate the thick palladium of such redoubted orthodoxy, nor the devil himself tempt it to be guilty of two ideas that can be linked together.

But I will only stand upon the general argument, and I ask, whether in renouncing common sense we must renounce common honesty too? Or will any body tell me why it is, that the advocates of the New Testament dare not speak the language of the New Testament. Dare not trust the book to present us with its own contents, nor trust us to judge the book by what its contents really are. The moment the believer puts his hand on the New Testament, as if struck by the electric touch of the torpedo, the life of honour, honesty, and fairness is paralyzed in him; he becomes a driveller—dare not read straight on, nor stop to think on what he reads. Had it not been so why should the Bishop in the catalogue of the miracles which he has given us, have omitted the miracle of Christ's blasting the fig-tree; of his making the men drunk at the marriage feast; of his threshing the fellows in the temple; of his knocking down the watchmen that had got a warrant for his apprehension; of his catching fish with money in their mouths; of his setting the cock a crowing to vex St. Peter; of his spoiling a large quantity of pork, and drowning a whole regiment of devils.

Was there no miracle in all this? Or do miracles lose any

thing of their divine character by being spoken of, in ordinary language, that what was really very sacred and solemn in a chapel should become contemptible in any other place? Does our salvation depend on such a nicety, that we may not venture to express even the most Scriptural ideas in any other than Scriptural phraseology; that we may not say that swine are pigs; that we may not speak of the lamb of God as his sheep, or his mutton, or his chicken, or his veal, or his pork, or his bacon, nor confound the old ram, for he must be an old one by this time, with "his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is His."* Nay, our plight is, I fear, even worse than this, for in a majority of cases we shall find it impossible to preserve our faith, unless we are content to receive the Scriptural language without having any ideas at all.

And hence it is, that our good Clergy, from the disinterested anxiety they feel for the welfare of our immortal and everlasting souls, always skim this dangerous matter as lightly, and as swift o' the wing as a water wag tail over a stagnant pool. We know that, "our blessed Saviour cured the most inveterate diseases;" but one disease that he cured, he drove out at least fifty devils. Now, suppose we were to be guilty of thinking of this, inevitable damnation must be our portion. I defy the faith of man to stand against it, for suppose we were to ask what the devils were like? How big were they? How did they get in? Or what sort of pleasure could the little sooty rogues find in running up and down a poor man's bowels. It is hard to tell whether the possessors, or the possessed, were most to be pitied. The Prophet Jonah, we know, complained so bitterly of his accommodations in the whale's belly; that the whale herself grew sick of him, and yet he had a great deal more room to kick in than a legion of devils would have found in the carcase of Sir William Curtis, or of Daniel Lambert himself.

The only evil to be deprecated in the treatment of this subject is the modern and fashionable sophistication which would handle the word of God deceitfully, by pretending an accommodative, or allegorical sense in these sacred truths; but surely if believers will have the inconsistency to pretend that things are not to be understood as they are represented, and that these miracles were allegorical they cannot justly complain, if unbelievers in their turn should chose to consider the person to whom they are ascribed as allegorical likewise. And, if the two gentlemen, Christ and the Devil, represented in Scripture as intimate acquaintances, and interchanging compliments as palpable as "I know who you are, Master Jesus," and "then say nothing about it, and come out of him."—Mark, chap. 25. There can be any way of explaining that one of the parties had no real existence. What proof can possibly remain of the existence of the other?

* Delivered in the pompous manner of a priest at the altar.

But it is important to observe, that when the good Bishop or any of our clergy quote the miracles of Christ to convince men of the truth of his religion, they always lay the greatest stress on the weakest part, and select those miracles which are most open to the suspicion of imposture, or least supported by the probabilities of evidence; for to tell us that "Christ cured the most inveterate diseases," is but to reduce the Gospel to the level of a quack-doctor's advertisement, for they all cure the most inveterate diseases. That "he walked on water;" why Il Diavolo Antonio at the theatre beats that fool's trick every night. And if he did walk on water, they who speak in proverbs would say, "he that was born to be hanged was sure not to be drowned." And if he fed five thousand persons with five barley loaves and two small fishes, it is plain that they could not have been the sort of loaves and fishes that all our clergy are so hungry after. And I am sorry, that to this day they so closely imitate his mystical hospitality—for though they invite us to come and partake of the Lord's Supper, and call it a feast, and a banquet, and the "strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine,"* they give us bread and wine enough—to starve a sparrow: so much wine as would put the candle out, and a bit of bread no bigger than the tip of my finger, after saying more grace about it than our Worshipful Court of Aldermen ever heard over all the calapash and calapee that strengthens and refreshes their goodly corporation.

The case of the blind man, in the 9th chapter of St. John, on which the Bishop lays his most particular emphasis, and to which he most earnestly invites our attention, like all the other miracles which he has referred to, will be found to command our respect only in proportion as we withhold our attention. For believing and examining never yet went together in any man, they are as fire and water to each other—the victorious element must necessarily absorb and destroy its rival. And never gave man to man advice more cordial and sincere than that which I would urge on the consciences of all believers—If you would preserve your faith in the Gospel, for God's sake beware of examining it: and if you do that, your faith is gone for ever.

Should you, for instance, happen to observe, that the man on whom this miracle was performed was A BEGGAR, and made a trade of his blindness, and that he could see his way to the pool of Siloam before he recovered his sight, as well as he could come back again afterwards—Satan would be apt to suggest, that so shrewd a saint would hardly have consented to give up one way of business unless another and a more profitable one was put in his hands—and Jesus, we know, was the friend of beggars,

* Delivered in the tone of a school-boy saying his Catechism.

thieves, and swindlers, and of all sorts of sinners. But should it be your misfortune (which God forbid) to suffer a wicked thought to arise in your mind just as your eye was gliding over the 29th verse of this chapter, you might be apt to doubt whether the translators of the Gospel believed it themselves; or how else when they wanted a word, not found in the original, to express the character of our blessed Saviour, they should have fixed on nothing better than *this Fellow! as for this Fellow! this fellow, Jesus Christ!* O Lord, O Lord! it makes my hair stand an end. I would not have said such a thing for the honour of my black coat and shovel hat. But this comes of translating and examining the Scriptures! Now don't—don't examine them any more!!

The miracles to which our Bishop does not choose to call our attention, and which indeed he wholly omits in his enumeration, were however of a much more respectable complexion; and had that character of publicity and notoriety which the miracles he has selected had not. Mr. Belsham himself confesses, that the resurrection of Christ was only a private miracle. The transactions in a sick room could have had but very few witnesses; and even when he healed those whom he met engaged about their usual business in the streets, and who therefore could not be in a dying state, he generally gave them a charge to see that no man knew it. But the miracle of driving the money-changers out of the Temple was the most public of any, and the most striking of all his mighty works. It was calculated to produce the most lively, or rather the most *deadly* impressions; and it is only to be regretted that the sacred historians have not informed us how those impressions were received; nor how the favoured individuals who on this occasion must have felt that “the word of God was quick and powerful,” behaved themselves under the divine operation.

There can be no doubt that the meek and holy Jesus, who did no violence, neither was guile found in his mouth, did yet, nevertheless, accompany his actions with suitable expressions, which as they are not given in the original, it would not be decorous in me to mention in the vulgar tongue. But, really, to see the House of God, which with respect to its situation in the metropolis, may be called his town-house, turned into a vile market, was enough to make his Son not very particular in the choice of his language—I should have had a little *breaking out at the mouth* myself under such circumstances—but the holy prophet, Nehemiah, may assist our conjectures, as he informs us in the 25th verse of this 13th chapter, how he himself purged the temple on a similar occasion—“And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote *divers* of them, and plucked off their hair and made them swear by God;” to which the Holy Prophet very properly adds, “Therefore, O Lord, I beseech thee, blot not out my good deeds.”

This miracle, therefore, is the one which I should have fixed on, though the Bishop has passed over it as capable of the clearest evidence in its own nature, and, if established, exhibiting at once the proof and the character of Christianity. Nor could Infidelity itself demand or wish a more satisfactory evidence than that he who once plaited a whip of small cords, and applied the pretty ticklers so effectually, to purify the Temple, would only once repeat that operation for the benefit of some who are carrying on as dirty work as ever in his Temple. And if his Temple be that large house on the top of Ludgate Hill, he should have to drive out not the money-changers merely, nor to upset the stalls and tables of honourable trade—but to sweep out the mouldering banners of war and violence, and break down the monuments which the folly and barbarity of mankind have consecrated to murderers, thieves, and villains, the records of whose bloody deeds have made Jehovah's House fouler than Vulcan's stithy.

As to the kind of testimony, borne to the miracles of Christ, in the character of the persons who were eye witnesses of them, and who the bishop would persuade us, sealed their testimony with their blood. Ere we can attach any weight to that testimony, we must forget that first deduction of Reason, than which no mathematical axiom was ever more certain, that “NO TESTIMONY WHATEVER CAN CONFLICT WITH NATURAL IMPROBABILITY,” and when his lordship, who is so fond of making up a dozen, tells us that the twelve apostles “were plain, honest, unprejudiced men,” though on the very same page he tells us, that “being Jews, they were of course strongly prejudiced.” He must have forgotten or wish us to forget, that in the number of the twelve apostles, was the perjurer Peter, and the traitor Judas, and were they after all plain honest men. The insidious note from Dr. Beattie, that no man ever laid down his life for the honour of Jupiter, Neptune or Apollo, but how many thousands have sealed their Christian testimony with their blood, only shews that Jupiter, Neptune and Apollo were better than Christ, and their religion so much better than his, in that whatever their worshippers had to sacrifice, they were not called on to sacrifice themselves, I believe that our Christian divines, were the first in the world that ever thought a religion the better, because of the number of its professors, that it brought to the gallows.

But how can the miracles performed by Christ, demonstrate him to have possessed divine power, even granting them, when there is not a Christian in the world on this argument, but what hath more divine power than he ever had; for he that believeth on me, said he himself, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.—John xiv. 12.

Or how can miracles under any circumstances, or with any degree of evidence be a proof of a religion coming from God, when the Scriptures repeatedly assure us, that miracles are the last

and highest proof of a religion coming from the devil. I shall, therefore, give my decided vote against the proposition which has now been read, and against miracles of any character. And make the best of them. They were but as the sky rockets, and blue candles of a very dark night's gala, which the light of returning day, discovers to have been formed of mere salt and charcoal, sent up in a glorious blaze, and coming down in an old stick. So much for miracles.

ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS AT THE WESTMINSTER AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY.

BY AN EYE WITNESS.

ON Tuesday, the 28th ult. an Anniversary Meeting of the Westminster Auxiliary Bible Society was held at the Argyll Rooms, Regent-street. Lord Bexley in the Chair. Present the Earl of Rocksavage, and a few other Noblemen, the Secretaries of the Parent Institution, and a large assemblage, presenting about the proportion of forty or fifty ladies for one gentleman. The proceedings of a Bible Society would be little worthy of notice, but that they were diversified on the present occasion by an incident which seemed considerably to disturb the serenity of the Saints. A single chair had been left vacant on the platform on the right of the Earl of Rocksavage, and a few minutes before the Secretary had concluded reading a very long report of the state of the Society, the crowd made way to the gentleman in attendance, conducting the Reverend Divine for whom the vacant seat among the grandees seemed to have been designed; judging from the effect as a *coup-d'œil*, it could not have been filled to better advantage. The person who occupied it wore an elegant shovel-hat, a richly laced sacerdotal coat, with bullion sleeves, and a quizzing glass suspended from a superb gold chain. He assisted his vision (which appeared by no means defective, by the supplement of a magnificent opera glass; the use of which gave ample display to his diamond ring, and by its direction round the encircling beauty, seemed clearly to indicate that its possessor had not yet learned to "set his affections on things above." Such an appearance was wholly foreign to the climate; and though not exceeding the allowance of strict decorum, had a very apparent effect in dissipating the gloom of surrounding countenances. Many of the younger females gradually discovered a relaxation of feature which seemed to own that there were other ways of being eloquent than making long prosing speeches. Upon the conclusion of a lengthy harangue by one of the Secretaries, the stranger, whose appearance and gaiety of manners in so solemn an assembly had rendered him an object of suspicion to some and of eager curiosity to all, stepped forward and said,—“My Lord, shall I have your leave for a few minutes in my turn to address a few words to the present company; I assure you, Sir, I have no intention to trespass on your liberality and pledge myself to offer a communication highly worthy both their attention and yours.”

His Lordship much agitated, in reverence to the clerical hat which the stranger held in his hand rose from his seat, and said,—“ May I ask, Sir, if you are a subscriber to the Society or mean?”—Sir, said the stranger. I have been a subscriber to the Society in years past. I am not one now, but am ready to become so if the secretaries who have at so great length addressed this meeting can justify the statements which they have made. I have not come to present the society with *money*, but with that which this Society is in much greater need of—the TRUTH. His Lordship intimated indistinctly, that provided the object for which the Society met were not infringed on, there would be no objection to hear a few brief observations. Upon which, the stranger resumed his seat, and his quizzing-glass. Suspicion now began to whisper that “ Satan sometimes transforms himself into a minister of light,” and the stranger might be ULYSSES in the Trojan camp. More than the hint was given that this was actually the case. The stranger had already presented a number of printed papers to each of the solemn wiseacres in *Golgotha*, they were the Manifestos of the Christian Evidence Society; and these holy missionaries, lordlings, and saints could no longer be ignorant that they had one among them who if allowed to speak, would speak but with no friendly voice! Each of the tedious declaimers threw out in his turn, the *warning voice*, in anticipation of the coming war, and the last speaker but one, with a twang and grimace that LISTON could not caricature, told his Lordship that “ as he had resisted the enemies of his country so he was now called on to resist the *Man of sin*, for we are not ignorant, said he, of his devices. His devices in modern times, was to ensnare men’s souls by means of *interrogations*, or asking of questions, it was by this advice, that he prevailed over our first parents, saying to them, yea, hath God said?—and, therefore, if on the present occasion, he should have recourse to the same device, he hoped no Christian would condescend to answer him.” This hint was broad enough but the good natured strong and significant waggery with which it was received was worthy the invincible good temper of the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. When at length permitted to speak (which was not till the whole business of the meeting was concluded), the Reverend Robert Taylor began in a most animated and eloquent manner a *Catilinarian* against the injustice of his lordship’s anticipations and of the various speakers significant insinuations, that any thing like rudeness or indecorum was to be expected from him, nor had never interrupted the harmony of any well-conducted society in the world. He wished to occasion a division of feeling in the present, nor came not to interrupt their proceedings, but to offer what he had a right to consider and to call an HONOR to their Society, and as the Reverend Missionaries and Preachers had detailed so much at length their indefatigable labours in compassing sea and land to proselyte the black Hottentot the fetid Samoied, and the stupid Lascar. He came to invite them to attend the discussions of the Christian Evidence Society, where they would find an assemblage as respectable as that which they had then addressed, and would be heard with the most profound attention, only subjecting themselves to be politely questioned, and learnedly replied to—to which he thought no men who were conscious that they had nothing but truth to offer, could reasonably object: for his own part he would not deceive them for a moment, nor gain any advantage over their misapprehension. Though an ordained Clergymen of the Church of England, and justified in maintaining all the respectability that can attach to that character, he did not believe in the Christian religion.” This was enough—instantaneous uproar, and cries of off! off! defeated every further attempt to obtain a hearing, but upon descending from the rostrum, the Reverend Gentleman had

the honour to the infinite mortification of their Reverences and Lordships in Golgotha, to be petitioned by the ladies for copies of the manifestoes which he delivered with unlimited liberality into their fair hands.

Q.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. BEARD.

It will be no less wise, than fair to acknowledge, that, in Mr. Beard, we have an able opponent; as able an opponent as the side he advocates will allow room for the display of ability and the advantages of industry. But the readers of the correspondence cannot fail to see, that he no where touches our vital parts.

W. W. R. is preparing a short letter, as an explanation of that part of the correspondence which refers to the passage in Tacitus about the Christians. The Reverend Mr. Taylor, confining himself to oratory, does not intend to enter the field with paper. The rostrum is his field. When I have my house and business in a place in which they can be put in order, so that I can sit down to read free from an undisturbed mind, which has not been the case since I left Dorchester Gaol, I purpose to review the correspondence. But for a day's sickness, which confined me to the bedchamber, I should not have been able to have written the letter which appeared in Number 3. In a few days, I hope to possess a roomy house and fine shop; and while saying this, I must not forget to say to country agents and friends, that I am about to enter into a heavily expensive concern, and shall want all the assistance they can give me for the moment. But this concern is one which will give, not only respectability of appearance, but something like splendour to the TEMPLE OF REASON.

R. C.

BIBLE SQUABBLE IN SHOREDITCH CHURCH.

ON Monday evening, the 13th inst. the Rev. Mr. Taylor was present at a Bible Society's Meeting in Shoreditch Church. The Christians were savage in a high degree, and a well-dressed woman, or fiend in woman's clothes, was heard to say, that she should like to see him torn limb from limb. Another fiend in man's apparel made him threats with the visage of an infuriated fanatic. This sort of violence was carried to such an excess, that

the Reverend Mr. Mortimer grew ashamed of it, and interfered to check the raging of the holy fury. In the course of the evening blows were resorted to by the Bible folks, and the word of God was felt as well as heard among all who were supposed to be opposers of the Bible. Mr. Taylor could get nothing of a hearing, and uproar was the order of the evening.

JOINT STOCK BOOK COMPANY.

I HAVE said but little about this company for the last few weeks, for the fact is, that for want of room for the printing department, I have not been able to use, in this quarter, the money which has been remitted to me. On the first quarter day, I shall give a satisfactory account of what has been done, and what is intended to be done. The book entitled, "Good Sense" has gone on but slowly, in consequence of the labour which a gentleman has imposed upon himself, to read the American Translation by the French Copy and to mend the Americanisms and the inelegant English with which it abounds. This task is little short of a new translation. There is one thing to be considered, that, but for books, not one farthing expense has been incurred for the company. So, if we have done but little in the first quarter, we have expended less.

R. C.

BIBLE MEETING, BIBLE LORDS, AND THE REVEREND MR. TAYLOR AT THE CITY OF LONDON TAVERN.

THIS day, the 16th inst., a Bible Meeting was held at the City of London Tavern. In the absence of Lord Bexley, Mr. Hale took the Chair. After the third speaker, Mr. Taylor claimed a hearing; but was opposed throughout, after an energetic struggle at every attempt. He was successful, however, in distributing his manifestoes among the ladies present, and greatly annoyed and greatly agitated the Bible Lords and Priests.

R. C.

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